

Miss Laurinda Bower  
HM Area Coroner, for the coroner area of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire  
The Council House  
Old Market Square  
Nottingham  
NG1 2DT

4 April 2025

Dear Miss Bower

**Cluster Inquests into the deaths of Anthony Binfield, David Richards and Rolandas Karbauskas**

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report, issued following the inquest into the deaths of Anthony Binfield, David Richards and Rolandas Karbauskas at HMP Lowdham Grange. As you know Sodexo Limited took over the operational management of HMP Lowdham Grange on 16 February 2023, with these deaths occurring on day 18, day 25 and day 37 of the contract commencement.

Your Regulation 28 report raises 8 numbered concerns, and we have adopted your numbering to respond to the two specific concerns directed to Sodexo and others:

2 A complete failure to identity and share risk pertinent information between prison and healthcare staff, and within those teams (response required from Minister for Prisons, NHSE, Serco, Sodexo and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust).

Sodexo recognises the importance of prison staff capturing and recording risk pertinent information. Whilst Sodexo no longer operates HMP Lowdham Grange, it does operate five prisons in England and is able to respond to your concerns on that basis.

Sodexo complies fully with *Early Days In Custody – Reception In, First Night In Custody, And Induction To Custody (PSI 07/2015 PI 06/2015, Re-issue date 4 November 2024)*. As part of this compliance, Sodexo routinely operates the following information sharing systems across its prisons:

- Suicide/Self Harm Warning (SASH) forms are shared with the Reception Nurse
- ACCT training is made available to all Healthcare staff, jointly with prison staff, including training on triggers and scenarios indicating when an ACCT should be opened
- Healthcare staff are invited to attend the following meetings alongside prison staff, where cases of concern are discussed. These meetings include

- Senior Staff morning meeting, including the Prison Director and Head of Healthcare. Within this meeting, prison staff present information about prisoners of concern following incidents or receiving of intelligence reports.
  - Weekly Safety Intervention Meeting (SIM). Attendance includes physical healthcare, mental health staff and psychology
  - Monthly Safer Custody Meeting
  - Complex case meetings, ad hoc, focusing on prisoners of concern
  - ACCT reviews
  - Briefings on each prison wing at each shift change. Staff concerns (prison or healthcare staff) are recorded in Wing Observation Book. Staff at all Sodexo prisons have been reminded of the importance of recording concerns in NOMIS and the wing observation book.
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- Sodexo ensure that NOMIS is available to healthcare staff, including installing NOMIS-compatible PCs in healthcare offices, so healthcare can access risk information before assessing or treating prisoner/patient.
  - The Safer Custody Team in each prison share risk information for all new prisoners with wing staff and key workers, in different forums depending on the urgency of the risk (verbally briefing, email, morning meetings, weekly SIM meeting) as well as within the Monthly Safer Custody Meeting.
  - Sodexo have recently introduced a digital Reception Screening Risk Assessment (RSRA) tool across its prisons, implemented on CMS following 2 years of development and trialling led by Sodexo in partnership with Unilink
  - The RSRA is completed by operational staff in reception when interviewing the prisoner on arrival and guides staff to consider obligatory key pieces of information that might indicate risk of harm, either to self or others upon arrival into custody, such as previous history of self-harm, information taken from Suicide / Self-Harm Warning Form (SASH) and/or Person Escort Record (PER), which all contribute to staff making appropriate risk decisions in the first few hours and days of custody.
  - Where the prisoner's responses indicate a potential risk of harm the system will automatically generate a digital Early Risk Indicator alert (ERI) and enables consideration of appropriate intervention and support to be provided at an early stage to help manage and reduce risks identified. Where an increased risk is identified the ERI warning flag will appear on the prisoner's CMS record alerting the induction unit staff and directing them to review the risk identified.
  - Staff will not be able to locate the prisoner into a cell until the staff member has acknowledged they have read the risks flagged. It will also flag where the RSRA is incomplete, perhaps due to the prisoner's volatility, or physical/mental ability to participate in the interview.

- The availability of this information is immediately accessible to prison staff on CMS enabling prompt sharing of information.

8. A failure to act with candour when engaging in post-death investigations (Minister for Prisons, Serco, Sodexo)

Sodexo's investigation process following deaths in custody, which has been shared as part of the substantive inquest proceedings, is to prioritise and identify risk at the earliest opportunity and to implement changes as required by any learning.

In these inquests, in candour, Sodexo took the decision at an early opportunity to share its death in custody investigation reports with the Coroner. The disclosure of the reports was notably before any direction for disclosure. The disclosure of the Sodexo investigation was in advance of the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's investigation reports, and indeed the Sodexo reports noted more failures than the PPO reports.

Whilst Sodexo always considers early admissions and agreed facts, the unique circumstances of these cases, with the number of overlapping organisations involved and individual officers with separate IP status, as well as ongoing and late disclosure of relevant material by the Ministry of Justice, meant that admissions by Sodexo, without trespassing on factual evidence due to be heard at the inquest involving other IPs, was more difficult and complex than would usually be the case. There are three further inquests involving Sodexo concerning deaths at HMP Lowdham Grange, and Sodexo will give careful consideration to admissions and agreement of facts in relation to each.

We know that you will share a copy of this response with the families, and we would like to again express our sincere condolences for their loss. Following the inquests Sodexo have ringfenced key safety tasks and safer custody staff in the event of changes in resourcing pressures. The implementation of learning from these sad deaths is a priority.

Yours sincerely

**Sodexo Limited**